

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
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FOI/PA# 1346532-0

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172-136-16

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

# Memorandum

TO : SAC, NEW ARK (172-23) (c) DATE: 10/26/71

FROM : JH [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: [REDACTED]

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b7C

ROBERT PRESTI, aka  
SPORTS BRIBERY

Re NY teletypes to Bureau 10/14, 16/71.

Retel 10/16/71 reflects subject apprehended  
by New York.

As no further investigation is to be  
conducted in this Division this case  
should be placed in a closed status.

file closed  
10/27/71  
f

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 5-12-00 BY SP5-JC/TMB  
912 1173



(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# TRACK SCANDAL:

## Three leading horsemen suspended in N.Y.

By EDWARD J. SYLVESTER biggest names got 30-day  
Three of horse racing's suspensions from the New  
York State Racing Commis- sion yesterday for fronting  
man said to have organized

crime connections.

The commission said Jim French, a crowd favorite in

the Kentucky Derby, Belmont and Preakness, actually was owned by Ralph Libutti, formerly of Englewood Cliffs and an alleged associate of Thomas (Tommy Ryan) Eboli of Fort Lee, reputed underworld boss.

Suspended from racing were the horse's breeder and former owner, Ralph C. Wilson Jr., also owner of the Buffalo Bills football team; John P. Campo, Jim French's trainer, and George T. Poole, who trained several other horses in reality owned by Libutti but registered under other owners' names.

\* \* \*

Libutti was barred from owning race horses or appearing at race tracks by the New York commission in 1968.

A fourth man, Frank J. Caldwell of Manhasset, N.Y., faces a showcase hearing on his owner's license on Oct. 29. Caldwell is the man the commission believed was Jim French's owner when he ran in the three Triple Crown races last spring. The horse placed second in the Derby, behind Canonero II.

The commission suspended Wilson and Campo on grounds that Caldwell was a front for Libutti in purchasing the horse from Wilson and in

SAC  
ASAC

C-1

C-2

C-3

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C-5

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C-8

C-9

C-10

Night Supervisor

SA

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

20  
THE STAR-LEDGER,  
NEWARK, N.J.

Date: 10/14/71  
Edition: FINAL  
Author:  
Editor: MORT PYE  
Title:

Character:  
or  
Classification:  
Submitting Office: NEWARK, N.J.  
☐ Being Investigated

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DATE 5-12-06 BY SP5 JPM/MS  
912973

training and entering him in races, and that Wilson and Campo were aware of the true owner's identity. Poole was similarly charged for training a string of other illegally owned racehorses.

Because of underworld infiltration of the racing world, state commissions

strictly regulate who may even purchase a race horse or appear at a racing event.

In addition to his association with Eboli, Libutti, now of Nassau County, N.Y., is wanted by Millburn police for allegedly passing three bad checks, totaling \$6,800 to a jewelry store there. Millburn has had an arrest warrant on Libutti since September, 1968.

The commission charged that one year ago Caldwell told the state he had purchased Jim French from Wilson, while in fact he had acted as Libutti's agent in return for a share of the horse.

Campo then entered the horse in the famed Triple Crown races, listing Caldwell as the owner although he knew Libutti actually owned the horse, the commission said.

Although the three were suspended from New York racing for only 30 days, the commission could reconsider the penalty after Caldwell's hearing two weeks from tomorrow.

Campo and Poole are considered among the leading thoroughbred trainers in the United States. In 1970, Campo's horses won 101 races and brought in \$907,237, both the top figures for the year

in New York racing, which is considered the nation's toughest circuit. He was named trainer of the year by the New York Racing Association for 1970.

Prior to the Triple Crown this year, Campo admitted administering the drug butazolidin to Jim French in his victorious Santa Anita race. Later, in New York, he denied having used the drug, legal in California but illegal in New York races.

Wilson, in addition to owning the Bills and breeding Jim French, owns West Coast Scout, recent winner of the \$100,000 Woodward Stakes at Belmont.

\* \* \*

Poole, whose son George 3d is an apprentice jockey, trained both Impetuosity and Twist the Axe for this year's Kentucky Derby. Both horses finished out of the money.

The transactions allegedly overseen by Caldwell listed the owners as "Buckchance Stables," which the commission says was a front for a Long Island dental assistant who acted for Libutti. Libutti is also known as Robert Presti and Nicholas Spadea and used these names in his horse dealings, the commission says.

10/1/71

AIRTEL

TO: SAC, NEW YORK (172-63)

FROM: SAC, NEWARK (172-23) (RUC)

SUBJECT:

[REDACTED]  
ROBERT PRESIT;  
[REDACTED]

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Fixing of Thoroughbred Horse Races,  
Aqueduct and Belmont Park Race Tracks,  
New York  
Sports Bribery

Re: New York airtel to Newark, 9/14/71.

Newark report of SA [REDACTED]  
captioned, [REDACTED] aka; IGA",  
dated 8/31/70, NY file 162-2310, with  
which a photograph of subject arrested as  
HARRY LA ROSA was enclosed.

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A check of the records of the Essex County Sheriff's Office, Newark, N.J., on 9/20/71, reflects that their file 2568-70-S pertains to RALPH LIBUTTI, aka Nicholas Spada, Nicholas R. Spadea, Nicholas Spades. Bench warrants 2888 and 2890 dated 6/9/70 are outstanding. These warrants charge subject with uttering bad checks. The above records reflect LIBUTTI's date of birth as 7/4/28 and 2/20/32.

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On 9/20/71 [REDACTED] Hudson County Sheriff's Office, Jersey City, N.J., advised that his records reflect HARRY LA ROSA, #59271, was arrested as a disorderly person on 12/17/66, disposition not shown. His date of birth is set out as 2/6/32, at Hoboken, N.J. His address was listed as 3512 Hudson Boulevard, Jersey City, N.J. New York note that this photograph and additional details of this arrest are set out in referenced report. The above records also reflect that the Union County Prosec [REDACTED] inquiry concerning subject on 8/23/71.

2-New York (Enc. 2)  
1-Newark  
DWS/clp  
(3)

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 5-12-00 BY SP5-JPM/B  
912773

NK 172-23

On 9/23/71, Sergeant [ ] Union County Sheriff's Office, Elizabeth, N.J., confidentially advised that he had made some inquiry regarding subject for [ ] TRPB, now at Atlantic City Race Track. He advised that he had obtained a photograph of LIBUTTI at the Hudson County Sheriff's Office when he was arrested under the name HARRY LA ROSA and furnished same to [ ]

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[ ] advised him that this individual in the photograph was identical with one he has in his possession of ROBERT PRESTI. [ ] also stated that recently a surveillance by the TRPB on PRESTI's home in Muttontown, Long Island, was conducted and [ ] GIL HODGES (Manager, NY Mets), were observed entering the PRESTI residence.

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On 9/23/71, Detective [ ] N.J., PD, advised that he conducted investigation concerning subject's passing bad checks to the [ ] [ ] N.J., in 1968. He advised that his investigation reflected that the true name of subject is RALPH LIBUTTI. LIBUTTI uses the alias of NICHOLAS SPADEA which is the name of his uncle who formerly resided in Union City, N.J., and who was born on 7/14/12.

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[ ] added that investigation also indicated that in 1969 subject and his wife resided at 271 Eldsmere Place, Fort Lee, N.J. On 4/24/69, an automobile bearing N.J. license [ ] was observed at this address. This car was registered to a [ ] above address.

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[ ] stated that this case was turned over to the Essex County Sheriff who presented it to the County Grand Jury. As of result subject was indicted and a bench warrant issued about June, 1970. He further stated that [ ] N.J., had recently told him that his attorney had been approached by subject's attorney to see if subject could make restitution for the checks he passed to [ ] if [ ] would agree to withdrawing charges against subject. [ ] stated that his investigation indicated that subject has resided at the following addresses in the past:

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271 Eldsmere Place, Fort Lee, N.J.

6909 Durham Avenue, N. Bergen, N.J.

869B Dorchester Lane, New Milford, N.J.

13 Magnolia Avenue, Hillside, N.J.

NK 172-23

On 9/23/71, Patrolman [redacted] Union City, N.J., PD, advised that both RALPH LIBUTTI and his uncle NICHOLAS SPADEA, date of birth 7/4/12, lived at 4200 New York Avenue, Union City, up until the early 1950's. He stated that he has not seen either of them in many years. He stated that the above residence is in a neighborhood that has completely changed and he knew of no one who would know either LIBUTTI or SPADEA.

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On 9/27/71, [redacted] N.J., advised [redacted] who resides at that address but was not at home at that time. She stated [redacted] NICHOLAS SPADEA, who she said was over sixty years of age. She then stated that she would not answer any other questions but would have [redacted] contact the Newark Office.

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On 9/28/71, [redacted] Attorney, [redacted] New York City, New York telephone [redacted] telephonically contacted SA [redacted] and advised that he represents the [redacted] N.J. He stated that he desired any interviews in the future with the [redacted] only be conducted in his presence.

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For the information of New York, all pertinent investigation conducted by this office in the matter of subject passing bad checks to the [redacted]

[redacted] N.J., is set out in the enclosed FD-302. In addition note that on 1/24/69, AUSA [redacted] advised SA [redacted]

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On 9/30/71, Detective [redacted] N.J., PD, advised that he had ascertained from the Essex County Sheriff's Office that they would not extradite subject on the outstanding charge against him.

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Enclosed for New York are two copies of FD-302 of SA [redacted] dated 1/29/69.

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F B I

Date: 9/28/71

Transmit the following in \_\_\_\_\_  
(Type in plaintext or code)

Via AIRTEL

(Priority)

TO: SAC, NEWARK

FROM: SAC, NEW YORK (172-63)

SUBJECT: [REDACTED] ROBERT PRESTI;

[REDACTED] Fixing of Thoroughbred  
Horse Races, Aqueduct and Belmont  
Park Race Tracks, New York  
SPORTS BRIBERY

Re NY airtel to NK, 9/14/71.

On 9/27/71, [REDACTED] TRPB, advised the NYO that in addition to the information he had regarding ROBERT PRESTI aka RALPH LIBUTTI, that he had also learned this date that there was an additional warrant outstanding in New Jersey for the subject in Essex County, under warrant number 288-2890, involving unpaid jewelry from the [REDACTED] New Jersey.

Newark is requested to ascertain if this warrant is indeed outstanding and is extraditable.

② - Newark  
1 - New York

JMF:lfp  
(4)

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DATE 5-12-00 BY SP5-JPM/MS  
912773

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Special Agent in Charge

F B I

Date: 9/14/71

Transmit the following in \_\_\_\_\_  
(Type in plaintext or code)Via AIRTEL \_\_\_\_\_  
(Priority)

TO: SAC, NEWARK

FROM: SAC, NEW YORK (172-63)

SUBJECT: [REDACTED] ROBERT PRESTI;

87-20050

[REDACTED] Fixing of Thoroughbred  
Horse Races, Aqueduct and Belmont  
Park Race Tracks, New York  
SPORTS BRIBERYb6  
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New York has instituted investigation over the sale of the thoroughbred "Jim French". Information has been received from the TRPB to the effect that this horse had undisclosed ownership with the real owner and controlling interests in the horse being one ROBERT PRESTI. Information was also received from the TRPB that PRESTI and others may have been in concert with several riders in New York and the possibility exists that there were fixed races involving [REDACTED] along with ROBERT PRESTI and individuals associated with him. To date, these accusations have not been proved and no evidence exists at the present time to substantiate these accusations.

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Investigation to date shows that the horse was listed as owned by one [REDACTED]

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- (2) - Newark  
1 - New York

JMF:lfp  
(4)

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Special Agent

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DATE 5-12-00 BY SP5 JC/TMB  
912773

NY 172-63

in New York and Long Island but in reality the individual known as ROBERT PRESTI controlled this horse and many other horses under false owners.

Investigation by the TRPB and the NYO to date reveals that ROBERT PRESTI is possibly and probably one NICHOLAS ROBERT SPADEA or ROBERT NICHOLAS SPADEA. Information developed by the TRPB also indicates that this individual may also be RALPH LIBUTTI, FBI Number 646 179 B. The individual known as PRESTI is now residing in Muttontown, Long Island, and according to witnesses is approximately 42 years of age and information developed by the TRPB is that his date of birth is 7/4/28.

Investigation has disclosed that the individual known as PRESTI also had several horses running in New York during the past year and used an individual, supposedly [redacted] as the listed owner. This individual reportedly presently lives at [redacted] New Jersey. She formerly resided, according to her application as an owner, at [redacted] New Jersey, and was employed as an [redacted] New York City, New York.

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Information has also been developed by the TRPB that when purchasing the house in Muttontown, ROBERT PRESTI used as his former address 271 Elsmere Place, Fort Lee, New Jersey. A surveillance by the TRPB at this address showed a car in the driveway bearing New Jersey license plate MLH 691, which was listed to a NICHOLAS SPADEA of 6909 Durham Road, North Bergen, New Jersey. In addition, when ROBERT SPADEA in the year 1970 applied for a license as an owner under the name of Raintree Farm, he listed his address as 271 Elsmere Place, Fort Lee, New Jersey.

Information was also received from a source of the TRPB that a NICK SPADEA, date of birth 7/4/28, was under

NY 172-63

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14687 investigation by the FBI, Newark, New Jersey, in the year 1968. A complaint was received that SPADEA purchased an unknown quantity of jewelry for which he gave two checks in payment. SPADEA allegedly asked the party selling the jewelry to hold the checks for some time. SPADEA later cancelled payment on these checks. They were in the amounts of \$5,100 and \$1,500. The United States Attorney [redacted]

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At the time SPADEA listed three addresses:

6909 Durham Avenue  
North Bergen, New Jersey

869B Dorchester Lane  
New Milford, New Jersey  
C/O [redacted]

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687 3rd Avenue  
Secaucus, New Jersey

Information was also received from the New York Racing Commission that a NICHOLAS ROBERT SPADEA, 869 Dorchester Lane, New Milford, New Jersey, had applied for an owner's license during the summer of 1968. At the time he furnished the following information:

Date of Birth	7/4/28
Height	5'8"
Weight	175
Hair	Brown
Eyes	Brown
Marital Status	Married
Occupation	Self-employed - Commodities and Land since 1958

NY 172-63

Bank

National Bank of Secaucus,  
New Jersey

References



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On 8/18/71, the following record was received from the Identification Division, FBI, on a RALPH LIBUTTI, FBI Number 646 179 B:

CONTRIBUTOR OF FINGERPRINTS	NAME AND NUMBER	ARRESTED OR RECEIVED	CHARGE	DISPOSITION
PD Union City NJ	RALPH LIBUTTI #5416	3/24/54	conspiracy to rob	n.g. 10/54
SO Jersey City NJ	RALPH PETER LIBUTTI #40822	6/11/54	robb	
PD Los Angeles Calif	ROBERT RALPH LABUTTI #129-X	applicant 5/26/55		
PD San Gabriel Calif	RALPH ROBERT LIBUTTI #4777-F	10/1/55	susp of bookmaking car theft & burg	
SO Jersey City New Jersey	HARRY LA ROSA #59271	12/17/66	disorderly person	

*Doys 2/6/32  
Hudson, N.J.  
3572 Hudson  
Blvd. Sec. 117  
Truck driver  
W-4-518-151  
Bn. per.*

NY 172-63

Newark is requested, from the information set forth above, to conduct appropriate investigation to ascertain all possible background regarding NICHOLAS ROBERT SPADEA and RALPH LIBUTTI and to determine if these two individuals are the same as believed by the TRPB. It is requested that [redacted] be interviewed regarding the individual known as ROBERT PRESTI as to his true identity. It is also noted that on the criminal record received from the Bureau, there is a notation that RALPH LIBUTTI is wanted for uttering bad checks, warrant issued 6/9/70, notify SO Detective Bureau, Court House Newark, New Jersey. Information received 8/25/70, refer to 2568-70 S. It is requested that investigation be conducted to determine if this individual is still wanted as the possibility exists that ROBERT PRESTI is indeed RALPH LIBUTTI and the whereabouts of ROBERT PRESTI is known at the present time to the NYO and the TRPB.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20537

SEP 20 1967 64

J. Edgar Hoover  
Director.

The following FBI record, NUMBER 646 179 B, is furnished FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY.

CONTRIBUTOR OF FINGERPRINTS	NAME AND NUMBER	ARRESTED OR RECEIVED	CHARGE	DISPOSITION
PD Union City NJ	Ralph Libutti #5416	3-24-54	conspiracy to rob	
SO Jersey City NJ	Ralph Peter LiButti #40822	6-11-54	robb	
PD Los Angeles Calif	Robert Ralph Labutti #129-X	applicant 5-26-55		
PD San Gabriel Calif	Ralph Robert Libutti #4777-1	10-1-55	susp of bookmaking car theft & burg	
SO Jersey City NJ	Harry LaRosa #59271	12-17-66	disorderly person	

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DATE 5-12-00 BY SP5 JF/TMB

912773

Information shown on this Identification Record represents data furnished FBI by fingerprint contributors. Where final disposition is not shown or further explanation of charge is desired, communicate with agency contributing those fingerprints.

Notations indicated by \* are NOT based on fingerprints in FBI files but are listed only as investigative leads as being possibly identical with subject of this record.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20537

SEP 20 1967 64

J. Edgar Hoover  
Director.

2

The following FBI record, NUMBER 646 179 B, is furnished FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY.

CONTRIBUTOR OF FINGERPRINTS	NAME AND NUMBER	ARRESTED OR RECEIVED	CHARGE	DISPOSITION
	<p>WANTED: Robert Ralph LaBatti wa. Buddy Borrel on Felony Warrant for GT (1 ct) NSF (2 cts) Notify PD Los Angeles, Calif per inf rec therefrom 7-9-50. NO LONGER WANTED per inf rec 9-14-65.</p>			

Information shown on this Identification Record represents data furnished FBI by fingerprint contributors. Where final disposition is not shown or further explanation of charge is desired, communicate with agency contributing those fingerprints.

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